

CARELESS WORDS—A TRUE STORY.

BY GRADUATE CASE.

Farmer Gray was what the world calls a rough man. He lived on a rough, rocky farm, on a rough, rugged mountain-side in Pennsylvania. But, though his farm was rough, it had many bright, smooth things about it, that made it very beautiful to his eyes and those of his tidy, rose-cheeked little wife, Mary, who kept his rough log-house as neat as a pin all the year round.

There were smooth, sunny spots on the hillsides, where the grass grew very green, and where the wheat yielded as many bushels to the acre as did the lands of his neighbors who lived in the valleys of the Susquehanna; where potatoes grew large, rich, and mealy; and, if you had asked Old Spud, his crop-eared horse, that plowed the ground for the planting, he would have said, if he could have talked at all, that never sweeter oats grown in the wide world. There was a pretty stream of water, too, that came out of the mountain-side, under a great rock, and danced down to the very door of Farmer Gray's home, made a dozen little waterfalls leaping over the obstacles that came in its way, and poured itself with a purring song into a deep spring, which the farmer had walled up for it; and then, as if it felt a little sobered at being caught, it rippled over the top into a little pond just below, where Old Spud went to drink morn, noon, and night, where the green-headed ducks quacked their joy, and the old gray geese swam every spring with her goslings.

Thus, you see, although it was a rough farm, it had its smooth places; and so had Farmer Gray's rough ways. He loved his farm, and his wife, and his two pretty children, that were his joy and pride. Arthur was a noble fellow of ten years, and could ride Old Spud to plow for the corn and potatoes, and bring in the sheep at night to keep them safe from mischievous dogs, and do a great many little chores. That pleased his father, and he would put him on his curly head, and say: "You'll be good for something some day. Guess you're worth the raising."

Ella, the sister, was only eight. Not as large as a six-year old girl should be, she was not healthy and strong; and it did not seem that she was loved as well as Arthur, although she needed to be far more than he did—for she was tender and loving herself, and he did not care a bit about it.

One day, Farmer Gray came home to dinner very tired; for it was unusually warm, and he had worked hard. Ella was sitting by the spring, eating her bread and milk, feeding the kitty on one side and throwing little crumbs to the ducks on the other. Her father came and lay down on the grass by her side, watching her with dreamy eyes.

"Papa, what makes you work so hard?" asked little Ella.

"Have to work to keep you in bread and milk."

"But Old Brindle gives me milk."

"Old Brindle would starve, if I didn't plow and make the grass grow."

Ella got up, and came to her father, and put her little arms around his neck, and said:

"Papa, when I get big and strong, I will help you; and you shan't work so hard for me, just for me."

The rough man was touched by her gentle tenderness; but he did not know just what to say, so his answer made Ella very sad indeed.

"You can't do anything. You're a little girl; and little girls aren't worth a cent. There's Bub, he can ride horse; Old Spud can plow. Brindle gives milk; we will kill the ducks one of these days for dinner, and the geese give us feathers for beds, and the sheep wool for clothes; the little brook is not idle either, but brings mamma water for the dinner-pot and tea kettle. But little girls are only good to eat bread and milk, and make their papas work."

"And Puss?" said little Ella, almost choking with emotion. She thought Puss as useless as herself, and that was some comfort.

"Oh! Puss catches rats and mice, and keeps them from eating my corn and mamma's cheese. There! little Good-for-nothing, run and pick up your cup and spoon, or the ducks will gobble them into the spring; and then I will have to fish them out instead of taking my nap."

Farmer Gray would as soon have hurt himself as his dear Ella, and he did not dream of punishing her sensitive little heart; so, when her lip began to quiver, and the tears to swim in her gray eyes, he said abruptly:

"There now, don't cry, if the ducks have tipped over your bread and milk. That's the way with girls. Arthur never cries. Run to the house, and mamma will give you more."

Ella gathered up her cup and spoon, and tried to suppress her sobs, so her father should not hear. At the house she found her mother too busy to notice her; so she sat her cup down, and ran out into the ravine back of the house, and hid herself among the bushes and ferns, and gave vent to her feelings in heart-breaking sobs.

Four little Ella! To be told by her papa that she was good for nothing but to make him work, and then to have him think that she was only crying for more dinner; it was more than she could bear. After a long cry, she became exhausted and fell asleep. When she awakened it was almost sundown. She was stiff and cold from the damp, and frightened by the gloom of the ravine. Starting up, she saw her father leading Old Spud to water, and heard her mother calling, "Ella, Ella!"

She ran to the brook to wash her face; and resolved in her little heart that she would not eat a bit more, and would try with all her might to be "good for something." Her heart ached, oh! so sadly; but her mother didn't know it, and made it more sore and painful by scolding her for going off into the woods and catching cold, and scolding her half to death, adding:

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